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SIPDIS
FOR REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HUB

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [TBIO](#) [EFIS](#) [TSPA](#) [XA](#) [XY](#) [ZF](#) [GH](#)

SUBJECT: OES BUREAU COMMENTS ON ACCRA REO FY 2009 WORKPLAN

REF: ACCRA 1304

¶1. Summary: The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) thanks Regional Environment, Science, Technology and Health Officer (REO), Geoffrey Hunt, and program assistant for the REO, Patience Charway, for their participation in the recent digital video conference on the REO workplan. REO is requested to consider OES comments presented within this post, such as identifying science and technology strongholds that are open for partnerships and science cooperation, and tuna licensing schemes for marine conservation efforts in developing the final REO workplan. We also encourage the Hub to look for outreach opportunities that highlight U.S. engagement in environment, science, technology and health issues. We see the hub work plan as a &living8 document which provides a framework but which can and probably will be modified during the year in order to respond to developments. End summary.

¶2. Thank you for your continuing efforts to facilitate regional environmental cooperation and for your participation in the November 5, 2008 Digital Video Conference (DVC) on your REO 2009 workplan. These DVC and/or conference calls generated significant comment and involvement by OES and the geographic bureaus. This is the second consecutive year in which we have conducted workplan reviews by DVC and we are very pleased with the resultant Hub)OES engagement.

¶3. OES understands that a strong working relationship between Hub Officers and Washington is an important component in our efforts to achieve our ESTH objectives. For that reason, we are pleased that Hub Officers were able to attend a two-day training course on the margins of the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC), where Hub Officers did an outstanding job in assisting delegations from their respective regions. We look forward to Hub Officers participating similarly at this year,s meeting of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting and hope to identify additional opportunities to strengthen DC-Hub ties in the

future.

Summary of OES and Bureau of African Affairs comments.

¶4. OES/PDAS Ambassador Harnish encouraged REO,s participation on several issues including: engaging governments on a plan for climate change as we may see new funding for these efforts and promoting development of biotechnology to address food security by drawing on the expertise of Dr. Nina Federoff, scientific advisor to the Secretary of State. In regards to funding small projects in your regions, we encourage your entrepreneurial spirit to work with regional economic missions to set aside small grants to extend OES goals and partner with PCI and other bureaus to assist. Finally, a potential partner for future cooperation is OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation), which is investing in clean energy in Latin America and will probably look to develop projects in Africa in the future.

¶5. OES/PA encouraged REOs to participate actively in external outreach and to connect with the PAO at constituent posts and the regional press, especially radio programming. We also support continued ESTH reporting including sending of photograph files to be included on the OES webpage. Please note also that in coming months, there will be extensive efforts to disseminate OES generated public service

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announcements starring Jane Goodall for public diplomacy outreach specifically in Africa.

¶6. OES/IHB encouraged external outreach especially on global health days (IHB has a list), i.e. World Malaria or TB Day. We asked for help to promote participation in the Ambassador,s Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Schools Initiative (AWASH) which should be launched in early spring. There is widespread interest in AWASH in posts across Africa and your leadership is welcomed. We reminded REO,s that HIV and Avian flu are not part of the IHB portfolio.

¶7. OES/OMC highlighted implementation of turtle excluder devices (TEDs) for shrimp harvesting and subsequent export to the US and is interested in discussing further tuna licensing schemes for marine conservation efforts.

¶8. OES/ENV emphasized UNEP,s work on capacity building and technology development i.e. GRID (Global Resource Information Database), satellite imagery, and the Atlas for Africa. There is a broad interest in these tools to strengthen the scientific base for policy makers.

¶9. OES/ENRC highlighted continued focus on the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, Liberia Forest Initiative, CAWT, and CITES and is particularly interested in feedback on impact of recent ivory sales.

¶10. OES/STC encouraged REO,s to identify science and technology strongholds that are open for partnerships and science cooperation and reminded post that any requests to USG agencies for Embassy Science Fellows must meet mission focus especially in an environment of limited funding.

¶11. AF/EPS suggested using a current Jefferson Science fellow in their office as a great resource to establish connections with the academic network here in the US to build science and technology capacity in Africa.

Promoting ESTH Issues

¶12. PA urges hubs to view external Outreach as critically important to reach audiences and public constituencies throughout your region. ESTH initiatives such as grants, training, and conferences are a perfect fit for public outreach as they are popular and positive stories for press and outreach events. Please consult (early) with Public

Affairs Officers (PAOs) in constituent posts to share your programs and workplan, to explore areas of possible outreach.

¶13. Examples of ESTH events with significant outreach potential include the signing of Science and Technology (S&T) agreements, the awarding of USG grants for ESTH projects, and visits from technical agencies or high-level USG officials. The Bureau for Public Diplomacy (and Public Affairs) considers ESTH issues to be of great interest as a soft side of USG cooperation, meaning that they are usually non-controversial yet highly compelling stories that are very worthy of sharing with local audiences.

¶14. We also encourage you to (propose) take advantage of visitor and speaker programs on science and environment themes, working with and through your PAO. These programs serve Hub priorities by leveraging public diplomacy funding and expertise to advance ESTH issues through training, professional exchange and forums for wider dialogue. OES/PA and post PAOs should be consulted for specific advice to assure Hub projects get the recognition they deserve.

¶15. We appreciate that many of OES,s priorities and

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objectives were identified as action items in your draft workplan. These are: climate and energy strategies; natural resource conservation, particularly logging, wildlife and fishing issues; environmental policy such as implementing the Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act and Free Trade Agreement environmental work programs; oceans issues; global and regional health problems; polar affairs, with attention to sustainable tourism in the Arctic and Antarctic; emerging Global Positioning System and Global Navigation Satellite Systems issues; and science and technology partnerships, especially with Islamic communities.

¶16. We continue to seek feedback from REO,s and ESTH officers on the natural resource and environmental footprint in your region of major emerging economies, such as China. Your on-the-ground observations are essential to this effort.

¶17. We expect climate change to be a top outreach priority for ESTH officers, particularly in the lead up to the December, 2009 United Nations Framework Convention,s Fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP15) meeting in Copenhagen, which is anticipated to reflect the conclusion of a two year process laid out in the Bali Action Plan at COP13.

As the new administration works with the Congress to develop its climate policy, we will continue to provide information to ESTH officers accordingly. We also encourage posts to pursue greening activities using the Green Guide for Embassy and Consulate Operations, found at:
<http://obo.state.gov/greenpage/guide/>.

¶18. Again, thank you for your continuing efforts to build regional environmental cooperation and for considering our feedback as the workplan evolves over the course of the year.

Please do not hesitate to contact Matthew Gerdin with OES/PCI at (202) 647-4347 or GerdinMJ@state.gov with any questions or comments.

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